

Amnesty International Southend Group

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Thayyib Shaheem
Maldives

10th August 2017

Activist arrested for 'spreading panic' online

Social media activist Thayyib Shaheem was arrested on 16 March for 'spreading panic' online after criticising a controversial development project. He faces a 15-month sentence. The police claim Thayyib, a supporter of the opposition Maldives Democratic Party (MDP), was arrested for his tweets on the recent swine flu outbreak. Amnesty, however, believes it related to his public criticism of a proposed large-scale development project involving Saudi Arabia on the Faafu atoll, southwest of the capital Malé.

In early March a crackdown was launched on the media, opposition parties and opponents of the project. The Criminal Court in Male' threatened 'legal action' against journalists who 'disrupt the peace and stability of Maldives', while police raided the MDP's headquarters.

APPEAL Urge the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Thayyib Shaheem, and drop the criminal proceedings against him. State that he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression. Call on them to respect the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and end the harassment of journalists and media outlets.

Minister of Home Affairs Azleen Ahmed
Ministry of Home Affairs
10th Floor, Velaanaage
Male'
Republic of Maldives
Salutation: Dear Minister

His Excellency Mr Ahmed Shiaan
Embassy of the Republic of Maldives
22 Nottingham Place
London W1U 5NJ
Salutation: Your Excellency